



Focus on "Friends"

Southeast Region Friends Group News

Note from the Regional Director

The holiday season traditionally marks both an end and a beginning. As we celebrated the season in our individual ways with family and friends, we often find ourselves reviewing the year that quickly slid into history. We remember its joys and accomplishments, made



all the more meaningful by its sorrows and disappointments. Our desire to give gifts and share meals is enhanced by remembrances that there were those who stood with us all through the year, celebrating our successes and

helping us to move forward during the difficult times.

As I close out my first year as the Regional Director for the Southeast Region, I find myself looking back and feeling that we are doubly blessed: Not only do we have family and friends that we cherish, but we are also part of a larger Service "family" that includes you, our dedicated Friends Groups, who share our passion for wild places and wild things.

The members of this family relish the opportunity to do good things for fish, wildlife, habitats and people. In the past year, we built Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, caught ivory smugglers, connected kids with nature, implemented strategic habitat conservation, protected lands that benefit fish and wildlife, improved water quality for citizens in their local community, federally listed the

first frog in the Southeast, and rallied to support Gulf Coast restoration after the largest oil spill in the history of our nation.

We prove time and again that we will pull out all the stops for the resource and for one another in times of need. We demonstrated this in our willingness to "get our hands dirty" and assist any way that we could with the Deepwater Horizon spill. I personally experienced the extraordinary support of the Service "family" when I took on my new leadership role as Regional Director and when we lost our Director and friend Sam Hamilton this past February. I can attest to the fact that in this "family," we share one another's joys and bear one another's burdens. Beyond our shared passion for our conservation mission, it is this quality of life in the Service that makes our successes all the sweeter and our heartaches bearable.

The holidays also remind us that there is a new year of opportunities just around the corner. For the Service "family," this includes confirmation hearings for a new Director, Dan Ashe, whose history with the Service includes leadership roles as the Assistant Director for External Affairs, Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System, Science Advisor to the Director, and currently, Deputy Director. Here in the Southeast, the year ahead is full of promise and challenges as we continue to build our capacity to carry out science-driven approaches to addressing the many threats to our fish and wildlife resources; and as we continue our Natural Resource Damage Assessment work and restoration efforts for Gulf Coast habitats and resources on behalf of the Department of the Interior.



Kids at Loxahatchee NWR weren't afraid to get their hands dirty, credit USFWS.

Whether we looked back or looked forward this holiday season, what is abundantly clear is that what we accomplish for fish, wildlife, and habitats will always happen through people, especially people who are willing to come together for a common purpose to accomplish together what none of us can accomplish alone.

Just a few weeks ago, we released a link (<http://www.fws.gov/southeast/director/2010R4Priorities.pdf>) to our revised and updated Regional priorities that will guide our actions over the next three years. I know that accomplishing these priorities will happen the way it always does—through the creativity, innovation, and commitment of our employees and partners like you, our Friends Groups. These are exciting times in conservation. The challenges are huge, but I know from working with all of you that the capability to rise to that challenge has never been greater. I look forward to what we will do together in the days, months, and years ahead.

Cindy

Note from the Regional Refuge Chief *Dear Refuge Friends,*

I am grateful to have this opportunity to write to you my second week on the job, share information about my background and vision for the future, and let you know how I feel about Friends and other support groups for the National Wildlife Refuge System.



The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service begins with the words “... work with others ...” and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System ends with the phrase,

“... for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.” So our efforts together all start and end with people, working together for wildlife and habitats, to ensure they might be treasured forever by Americans.

With the Refuge System growing steady, while management issues only increase in complexity during an uncertain budget climate, it is quite comforting to know we are moving forward alongside “Friends.” The Refuge System’s amazing array of Friends and volunteers across the nation perform roughly 20% of all the work done on national wildlife refuges. A study showed that in 2009 volunteers, contributing a value of \$28 million served nearly 1.5 million hours — the equivalent of 665 full-time employees!

My experience with Friends groups began early in my career when I helped form the Friends of Pee Dee Refuge, benefitting greatly from their efforts in support of our small staff. A couple of stations later, when I served as the Deputy Project Leader for the Loxahatchee and Hobe Sound Refuges in south Florida, I worked closely with four very different and very important support groups.

The Loxahatchee Natural History Association was a more traditional cooperating association essential to outreach and visitor services. The Audubon Society of the Everglades, our “Audubon Refuge Keeper” (or “ARK”),

funded construction of an education pavilion and initiated the annual Everglades Day festival on the refuge. The Arthur R. Marshall Foundation spearheaded a multi-year cypress restoration project on the refuge where tens of thousands of dollars were raised and more than 400 volunteers planted 8,000 trees while garnering a significant amount of positive press coverage. And the Hobe Sound Nature Center, a unique nonprofit group at Hobe Sound NWR, conducted nearly all of the refuge’s interpretive programs through three of their paid staff members.

I simply don’t know what our refuge staffs would have done without those groups during my days in the field, and as Regional Chief now I cannot see a successful future for the National Wildlife Refuge System that does not include working with the larger conservation community, with Friends groups a key partner.

David

Q and A: *Where have you worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*

Next year will be 20 years for me with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. After volunteering at Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge, my first paid position was with Tensas River NWR, where I served as assistant manager trainee, living in refuge housing in the bottomlands of north Louisiana.

Next stop was in Cajun country, the bayous of south-central Louisiana as assistant manager for Lake Ophelia and Grand Cote NWRs. I met and married my wife there before we moved to the piedmont of North Carolina, working at Pee Dee NWR where our son was born. I detailed to Carolina Sandhills NWR in South Carolina before moving to Mississippi next where I served as refuge manager for Hillside, Morgan Brake, and Matthews Brake NWRs. We then traveled to south Florida where my daughter was born, and our family lived in refuge housing in the Everglades while I served as deputy for Loxahatchee and Hobe Sound NWRs. On to the Regional Office next, serving as a Deputy Refuge Supervisor for multi-state Districts II and then IV, before being named Regional Chief of the Migratory Bird Program.

What’s most important to you?

My faith and my family come first, and through the strength they provide, I feel as if I have boundless energy and enthusiasm for my chosen life’s work to serve wildlife, habitats, and people through the National Wildlife Refuge System and the Service. We have such a great mission. My favorite quote is by Thomas Jefferson who said, “In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock.”

Through a tough upbringing, I learned to be flexible, work hard, deal with problems, but hope for the future and see the best in people. I was largely shaped by early life experiences living in a single wide mobile home with a single mom who left her job as a secretary to work nights as a prison guard to help put my brother and I through college -- the first generation to do so from blue collar immigrant grandparents on both sides of the family.

How would you want your time as Regional Chief described 10 years from now?

In 10 years, I would want people to say I was most often heard asking, “How does this affect the field?” “How does it impact our people?” and “Is this consistent with priorities?”

I want it said that to help us through tough budgets there was an unwavering dual focus on **resource priorities** and our **people**. We found ways to say no to what’s less important as our best strategy to focusing on the best gains for wildlife and habitat. Leadership and overall employee career development were not at the whim of budgets — development of and care for our people were seen as central to our mission, our greatest lasting legacy to benefit wildlife and habitats.

In 10 years, I would want people to say we had “core culture” of strong **character** (doing the right thing), **communication** (consistent and clear), and **collaboration** (working together and with others). We worked very closely with the larger conservation community, and were kin within the Refuge System; esprit de corps was sky high. Important and difficult decisions were made without unnecessary delay, but only after meaningful input. Diverse staffs and strong opinions were seen as strengths. Managers knew that their voices were heard, factored into the decision, and highly valued.

Refuge News

How One Friends Group Improves Their Effectiveness

*By Dan Dziekonski,
President of Friends of Tennessee NWR*

A common requirement of businesses and nonprofit groups is the ongoing need to build capacity. Capacity takes on many faces but it is essentially the people, money or talent necessary to accomplish a task. Capacity building comes down to actions taken to improve effectiveness and it is no different in the Friends Community.

Friends Groups come in many sizes and they take on many different tasks as their primary roles. Because they serve refuges large and small in both rural and urban settings, capacity will take on different meanings at each and will change with each task. To restore a trail, capacity will take the form of manpower. To fund scholarships for environmental education, capacity will come in the form of cash.

The process of capacity building begins with the identification of the “what” it is you wish to accomplish. A strategic plan is valuable in laying out long term goals that you can accomplish in an ordered fashion. Once you have determined the what, the next step is the where. Where are we right now and where do we need to be. Overestimating your current capabilities will result in an overly optimistic view of attaining your goal. Be realistic in your assessment of where you are and what it is that is required by the coming task.

Once you have the what and the where the how of the journey is next. A suggestion here is to seek out natural synergies. Your primary goal may be to raise funds and you may select an event to do that. As you begin planning the event ask if it can also highlight the accomplishments of your group to serve as a recruiting tool for gaining new members and through publicity of the event give you a stronger voice as an advocate for the refuge. Any time you can accomplish your primary goal while increasing your effectiveness in other areas it is a win, win, win. Always work to accomplish several goals within each plan.

The Friends of Tennessee NWR use an Art and Photography Show to accomplish



Abigail Smith placed second and third in the youth photo category, credit Jean Owens.



Just some of the painted gourd bird houses, credit Jean Owens.

several goals. We ask local artists to paint and personalize bird houses and feeders that we offer for sale at a silent auction and later split the proceeds with the artists. These houses are displayed throughout downtown businesses for the month prior to the show. This generates a newspaper and online articles on the houses and draws attention to the upcoming show and the Friends Group. Prior to the show we again receive publicity in articles announcing the show. The show itself draws people that love art but don't necessarily like the refuge and aren't naturalists. Later we receive additional publicity when the winners in the art and photography categories are announced.

This one event allows for publicity to keep the group's name in front of the public, a chance to generate funds through the silent auction and the opportunity to recruit new friends members.

Once you have the plan developed weigh the risks and rewards and make a judgment on whether or not the goal

is realistic and attainable. It is much less painful to scale back your plan at this stage than to implement it and fail. Communicate your intentions clearly as you move forward with your plan and record your results throughout. You will need this information to determine success or failure.

When the day is over and the cleanup is through were you a success? Sit down and review all of the results from your project. Don't be afraid to say that you didn't get the return for your investment of time and money that you thought and will drop this event in the future. Your primary goal may have been to raise \$5,000 for scholarships and your event only netted \$3,900. But then you find that you had signed up 35 new members when you had hope for only 15 and that you got two newspaper articles, an online news story and radio coverage. You may have fallen short of your primary goal but succeeded far beyond your dreams in other areas and decide on the spot to do it again next year. So begin the planning and include improvements and you are on your way to another success.

Fisheries News

A New Hatchery Reveals Old Secrets

Bo Ginn National Fish Hatchery (NFH) is the newest addition to the National Fish Hatchery System, having been re-established as a federal facility just one year ago. It had not been in operation since 1996 when several federal hatcheries were closed or given over to states as a cost cutting measure.

Now the hatchery will play a critical role in propagating and providing a refuge for imperiled, threatened and endangered fishes and other aquatic species. Because of the unique water source there, Bo Ginn NFH will be a valuable tool for aquatic resource conservation.

However, extraordinary archaeological discoveries have brought new revelations about the importance of this site in terms of cultural resources, as well. The crystal clear springs that make the site an ideal location for a fish hatchery were once valued for an entirely different reason.

During the last days of the Civil War, the Confederates built a prison camp in Millen called Camp Lawton to relieve the squalor and overcrowding at Andersonville. The post was hastily abandoned only weeks later when threatened by Sherman's march on Savannah. For most of the last 100-plus years the site rested relatively undisturbed, the exact location of the camp having been lost to time. Prominent archaeologists long ago dismissed the possibility of significant findings, especially of personal artifacts.

But in the spring of 2010, student archaeologists from Georgia Southern University, working in partnership with USFWS and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, pinpointed what they believed to be the former site of prisoner occupation in a rarely trod pine forest across from the ponds at Bo Ginn NFH. When they began excavating, they discovered an enormous density and variety of prisoner artifacts on the hatchery property.



Community members gathered to view artifacts from Camp Lawton on the day they were revealed in August, credit USFWS/Tom Sinclair.

The news became public in August after months of planning and putting security measures in place. Word of the discovery became national and international news. According to prominent archaeologists, the site may be one of the most pristine Civil War archaeological sites found in modern history.

The local community has been instrumental in advocating for the protection of the site and for finding a way to appropriately house and interpret the artifacts locally. Plans are underway for the formation of a new hatchery Friends Group there.

For more information on the Camp Lawton site or to find out where you can view the artifacts in person, visit www.fws.gov/camplawtonsite.

Check it Out *Free Webinars Geared to Friends Groups*

The Public Lands Program presented a series of free workshops and webinars geared to Friends Groups. Topics ranged from joint planning and communication, partnership development, nonprofit governance, to fund and friend-raising. To view the webinars or to download the PowerPoint presentations visit: <http://www.publiclandsday.org/webinars/index.htm>



National media flocked to interview Kevin Chapman, the archeology graduate student who first made the discovery, credit USFWS/Tom Sinclair.

Calendar of Events

- **Starting January 14**
The Nature of Learning grant application process is open from January 14 to April 1. First-year grants are \$10,000 with a second-year follow-up grant of \$5,000. Information on the grant and application process can be found at www.nfwf.org/natureoflearning
- **January 30**
Applications due for National Environmental Education Foundation's Every Day Grants. These grants are capacity building grants for Friends Groups. www.neefusa.org/grants/every_day_grants_2011/every_day_grants_details.htm
- **February 8**
Tennessee NWR Discovery Series - "Backyard Habitat" For more information call the Refuge Office at 731/642 2091.
- **March 5**
Friends of St. Catherine Creek Refuge - Wild Things Environmental Education Festival
9 am to 4 pm
For more information call Pete Smith at 601/442 6696.

Tip of the Quarter

Feel overwhelmed by the mere thought of Capacity Building? You're not alone! Conducting a Google search of "Capacity Building in Nonprofits" yielded 232,000 entries in less than 0.26 seconds. To fully understand Capacity Building and why it is important can lead to endless hours of research and planning. To ensure that your Capacity Building efforts will be successful and actually achieve the outcomes you hope to accomplish, consider the following:

■ Consult with target population

Non-profits are created to fill a need, and so it is important that the initiative be driven by the people who will use the services provided by the non-profit. They are the experts on what the issues in the community are and hold the key to how these problems can be resolved.

■ Involve the community

It's important for your target population to feel a sense of ownership of what your organization is trying to accomplish. So, encourage them to get involved by volunteering for events, as board members, as volunteer manpower to get things done that the organization can't afford or in whatever capacity they wish to be involved.

■ Build trust

The constituents of your organization must trust you to be willing to provide input and to participate. You build trust by not making hollow promises that you may not be able to deliver on, by following up to ensure that tasks being done by others are completed, and by building positive relationships with your clientele. If you show sincere interest and caring, you will begin to build trust.

■ Set achievable goals

Your target population will generate a whole list of issues they want dealt with. However, it is important that you choose your first issue as something that is achievable without it taking too much time. You want to be able to work with your constituents to achieve a goal quickly and successfully because success breeds success. The more people in the community that hear you and community members have successfully achieved goals; the more likely they are to buy into the organization and want to be a part of that success.

USFWS



Wild Things Festival, St. Catherine Creek NWR

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